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adjoining mainland were called *Tarotɔlo koloko*. When a man was asked to what part of the country he belonged he would generally answer by mentioning one of the chief camping places of his local group. Thus a man of the *Tarotɔlo koloko* might say that he belonged to *Laropuli*, this being one of the chief camps of that country. A man of the *Teraut buliu koloko* might similarly say that he belonged to the village of *Čaičue*.

A man or woman is generally regarded as belonging to the local group in the country of which he or she was born. There is nothing, however, to prevent a person from taking up his residence with any other local group if he so wishes, and if the members of that group are willing to welcome him. It would seem that there were a fair number of such cases in which a man or a woman left his or her own local group to join another. In particular, when two young people belonging to different groups got married they might fix their residence either with his or with her parents.

The local group, as stated above, was characterised as the land-owning group. A man might hunt over the country of his own group at all times, but he might not hunt over the country of another group without the permission of the members of that group. Even at the present day, when the local organisation has largely broken down, some of these hunting rights are still observed. I noticed a case in which some of the men asked and obtained permission to hunt pig in a certain part from a man who was explained to be the owner of that part of the country, being one of the few survivors of the local group to which it belonged. It would, in former times, have been an offence that might easily have led to a serious quarrel for the men of one group to hunt or fish in the country or the waters of another group without having been granted permission to do so.

Within the territory of each local group there are a number of recognized camping places. During the greater part of every year the members of the local group would be found living together at one or other of these. Some of these camping-grounds have been in use for many centuries, as is shown by

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very plainly the constitution of a local group, consisting as it does of a few families. Each group seems to have contained, on an average, about ten families, with a few unmarried males and females.

The Andaman Islanders depend for their subsistence entirely on the natural products of the sea and the forest. From the sea they obtain dugong, turtle (both green and hawksbill), an enormous variety of different sorts of fish, crustaceans (crabs, crayfish and prawns) and molluscs. Fish and crabs are also to be found in the salt-water creeks which in many places penetrate inland for some miles. From the forest they obtain the flesh of the wild pig, wild honey, and a large number of vegetable foods—roots, fruits, and seeds.

The life of the forest folk is more simple and uniform than that of the coast people and we may therefore consider it first. During the rainy season, which lasts from the middle of May to the end of September, the local group lives at its headquarters camp, which, as we have seen, formerly often took the form of a communal hut. During this season animal food is plentiful, as the jungle animals are in good condition; on the other hand there is not much vegetable food to be obtained. The following brief account will give an idea of how the day is spent in such a camp at that time of year. Some time after sunrise the camp begins to be astir. The various members of the community make a meal of any food that may have been saved from the day before. The men start off for the day's hunting. At the present time dogs are used for pig-hunting. These dogs were obtained in the first instance from the Settlement of Port Blair, and their use in pig-hunting was learnt from the Burmese convicts. Nowadays every married man has at least one dog[1]. Before the dogs were obtained, hunting was a pursuit requiring a great deal more skill than it does at present. A hunting party consists of from two to five men. Each man carries his bow and two or three pig arrows, and one of the party carries a smouldering fire-brand. They make their way through the jungle until they find the fresh tracks of a pig, or follow up some of the usual pig runs

[1] In the North Andaman the times before the Settlement are spoken of as the time when there were no dogs, *Bibi jaiye* = "Dog not."

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512 224 until they come upon the animal feeding. In former days much skill was required to creep noiselessly through the jungle until they were sufficiently near either to discharge an arrow, or, if the jungle were more open, to rush in upon the animal shouting and shoot it before it could escape. At the present day it is the dogs that scent out the pig and bring it to bay, when the natives shoot it with their arrows.

512 252 When a pig has been killed it may be tied up and carried to the camp on the shoulders of one of the hunters, or a fire may be lighted then and there and the pig eviscerated and roasted. A cut is made in the abdomen and the viscera removed. The cavity is filled with leaves, the joints of the legs are half severed and the carcase is placed on the fire and turned over and shifted until every part is evenly roasted. It is then removed from the fire, the burnt skin is scraped clean and the meat is cut up. Meanwhile the intestines or some of the internal organs are cooked and eaten by the hunters. The meat is tied up in leaves and is carried to the camp. If the pig be carried home whole the process of roasting it and cutting it up is performed in exactly the same way at the public cooking place of the camp, the meat being distributed only after it has been thus partially cooked.

512 223 If the hunting party should come across a civet cat (*Paradoxurus*) or a monitor lizard they would endeavour to kill it[1], but the main object of every hunting party is to obtain pork. Snakes and even rats are killed and eaten. Birds, though plentiful in the islands, are not often obtained, for the density of the jungle and the height of the trees in which the birds conceal themselves, make it very difficult for the natives to shoot them with their bows and arrows. A man does not care to risk the loss of his arrow in a chance shot at a bird. The Andamanese do not trap either birds or animals, though some of the birds, particularly the rail, might be very easily caught in traps.

512 222 As the hunting party traverses the forest they may come across roots or fruits or seeds, or wild honey, and these are collected and carried home. In the rainy season only small

[1] They are only eaten in the rainy season.

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A comparison of the three branches of the Negrito race in the light of present information shows that the usual form of habitation amongst them is a sloping roof or screen of palm-leaves. One form of this, the simplest to construct, but only suitable as a temporary shelter, is in common use amongst the Semang and is found amongst the Negritos of Casiguran. The other form, more permanent but requiring more labour to erect, is in common use in the Andamans and amongst the Negritos of Zambales. Of communal huts we have no evidence in the Philippines. The communal shelter of the Semang consists of two screens leaning towards one another. The two types of communal hut of the Andamans are both derived from the family hut.

HUNTING, FISHING, ETC.

The Andaman Islanders depend for their subsistence entirely upon the natural productions of the forest and the sea. They make no attempt whatever to cultivate the soil. Until the introduction of dogs in 1858 they had no domestic animals. Young pigs are occasionally kept in captivity till they are grown, but they are killed for food and are not bred in captivity. Thus the Andamanese provide themselves with food by three different forms of activity: (1) collecting such things as roots and fruits and honey, (2) fishing in the sea and in the creeks, (3) hunting the wild animals of the forest.

For hunting the Andamanese rely entirely on the bow and arrow. Since they have had dogs they occasionally make hunting spears, but they did not do so in former times. They make no use whatever of any method of trapping game or birds. For fishing they also make use of the bow and arrow, wading out on to the reefs and shooting the fish, and in this they are very skilful. Crustaceans, such as crabs and cray-fish, are captured in the same way. In the North Andaman a sort of short fish spear was formerly in use as an occasional substitute for the bow and arrow. In all parts of the islands small nets are used by the women for catching small fish and prawns. In the Great Andaman large nets were formerly used for capturing turtle, dugong and large fish near the shore. At the present time the natives of the Great Andaman Division make use of harpoons with which they capture turtle, dugong and large fish from their canoes. Harpoons are not used in the Little Andaman. The Andamanese are also aware of methods of poisoning or stupefying fish in pools by means of certain plants that they crush and place in the water, but I have never seen them use this method of

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such, not because they find any difficulty in procuring other food.[1]

3. Both *àryô·to-* and *ē·rem-tâ·ga-* find ample[2] provisions for their simple wants in their immediate surroundings, without exerting themselves to any great extent, and their eagerness in the chase is induced almost as much by actual love of sport as by the necessity of obtaining food: were this not the case they would hardly be found spending so much time in dancing and singing, in personal decorations, and in the preparation of their meals, while they reject with aversion anything that has become at all tainted. Further, it may be fairly estimated that one-third of the food daily consumed by them consists of edible roots, fruits, and honey, and the remaining portion of the flesh of one or more of the following, viz.: pig, paradoxurus,[3] iguana, turtle, fish, and molluscs, with rare additions of pigeons and jungle fowls;[4] Flying-foxes, bats, rats, sea- (not land-) snakes, the larvæ of the Great Capricornis beetle (*Cerambyx heros*) called *òi·yum-*,[5] as well as two other insects, called *bū·tu-* and *pi·rigi-*,[6] are, it is true, also eaten, but they are partaken of by way of variety, and the latter are regarded as luxuries (*â·kà-râ·rnga-*, tid-bits) to supplement (not substitute) other fare.[7]

4. The Andamanese are nominally content with two meals a day, viz.: breakfast (*â·kà-nâ·-*) and a heavy supper (*â·kan-go·lajnga-*) after sun-down; they will, however, often help themselves to small quantities of food from time to time in the course of the day when engaged on any work; and, when leaving on a

[1] "It cannot be wondered at that these savages love the unfettered life of their own wild jungles, where their simple wants are easily supplied—a lean-to serving them for quarters, and food such as they are accustomed to being found in great abundance. Nothing comes amiss to an Andamanese maw; roots, wild fruits, berries, crabs, clams, fish, wild pigs, and turtle are all ravenously devoured, and a glance at the well-nourished bodies of men, women, and children amply convinces one that they do not starve" (*vide* "Bombay Gazette," 2nd August, 1881: "The Andamans, our Indian Penal Settlement;" *vide* also paper by Professor Owen, F.R.S., "On the Psychical and Physical Characteristics of the Mincopies," Report of British Association, 1861. p. 246.)

[2] *Vide* "Tribal Communities," paragraph 2, and Appendix F (*Wō·l*'s statement).

[3] It is presumed that Dr. Day refers to this animal when he states that "they eat cats," for they do not appear ever to have had any fancy for the flesh of *pūchi*, the name they have adopted for the domestic cat, from the English "pussy."

[4] *Vide* "Tabu," paragraph 2 (footnote).

[5] Probably the "fat grub, about three or four inches long, much relished by the natives" (Australians), mentioned by Mr. H. W. Bates, in his "Illustrated Travels," is identical with the *òi·yum-*.

[6] The *bū·tu-* is found in rotten logs of jungle trees, especially the *Dipterocarpus lævis* (*á·rain-*), *Gluta longipetiolata* (*já-*), and *Chickrassia tabularis* (*ó·ro-*).

[7] Their fancy for grubs does not extend to the *Termes natalis*.

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[136] prove that they are, and always have been, fairly numerous.[1] The pig hunts are most frequent during the rains, not only because these animals are then more plentiful and in better condition, but because it is no longer the *râp-wâb-*, or season of abundance of jungle fruit and honey; from this, however, it must not be inferred that scarcity is then experienced, for those who choose to help themselves need never be in want.

11. During the cool season, *pâ·par-wâb-*,[2] the people themselves are alleged to become noticeably thinner: this they attribute not to a deficiency of food, but to the meagre condition of the pigs, which are then breeding, and to the fact that the edible roots (or yams), and other fruits then in season are not fattening. There are six varieties of esculent roots, viz.: the *gō·no-*, *châ·ti-*, *kâd-*,[3] *bō·to-*, *mal·ag-*, and *tăg·i-*, which are eaten alone (preferably cold), and not with meat; their chief difference consists in the extra care in preparation which some require, in consequence of their very acrid flavour.

12. The *gō·no-* is cooked in three ways: (*a*) it is placed on the fire in the condition in which it is found until it is soft, when it is freed from the burnt earth and eaten; (*b*) the root, after being washed, is cut up into small pieces and boiled in a pot; and (*c*) after being washed and cut up, the pieces are wrapped in large leaves and baked on burning logs.

13. The *châ·ti-* is cooked in the first of the above-mentioned methods, or by surrounding it with hot stones,[4] and covering the whole with leaves and weights, in order to confine the heat as much as possible.

14. The *kâd-* is first cooked as found, the skin is then peeled off, and a number of thin slices are cut and placed in water for a couple of days, so as to lessen the bitterness of its flavour; afterwards it is either baked in leaves or boiled, as already described in speaking of the *gō·no-*.

15. The other three varieties are never boiled, but are placed on the fire without leaves, and the outer skin is removed before they are eaten.

16. The seed of a species of sea-weed, known to them as *tô·no-tòng-*, on which turtles and dugongs feed, and which can only be obtained in small quantities, is carefully cooked and eaten as a relish.

[1] In his examination of a kitchen-midden near Port Blair harbour the late Dr. Stoliczka recorded that "the large number of bones of the Andaman pig is remarkable."

[2] This is the period between the rains and the dry season, and lasts about ten weeks, between the middle of November and the middle of February.

[3] The *gō·no-*, *châ·ti-*, and *kâd-*, are very plentiful during the cool season, and are much relished.

[4] *Vide post* "Stone Implements," paragraph 1.

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726 they use shields,[1] and the idea of throwing up earth-banks, or constructing any species of defence for the better protection of their numerous encampments, does not seem to have occurred to them.[2]

4. Night attacks have been made now and again, but the favourite time is the break of day, when the unsuspecting enemy are sound asleep; or at a late hour when they are likely to be engaged in the preparation or consumption of their evening meal.

727 5. Women and children incur a like risk with men on these occasions, but it would not be considered a matter for boasting should any of them fall victims in the strife, while a child which might be captured uninjured would meet with kindly treatment, in the hope of his (or her) being induced ultimately to become a member of the captor's tribe.

6. The property of the vanquished is of course treated with little ceremony: everything portable is appropriated, and all else is injured or destroyed.

●224 7. No confirmatory evidence is required to prove the truth of a statement declaring a man to have slain one or more foes, but if, in hunting, he should kill at a distance from home an animal too heavy for him to carry back unassisted, he would cut off the tail or some other portion which would afford ocular demonstration of its size, and serve as an inducement to his friends to assist him in bringing in the carcass.

Hunting and Fishing.—1. As I stated in an earlier section, the Andamanese are, for the most part, keen huntsmen, and their eagerness in the chase is one of the chief hindrances in the way of their becoming agriculturists, for a great portion of their time being thus spent, the sites of their temporary (as of their permanent) encampments are to a great extent determined by the advantages which they offer for the pursuit of their favourite pastime.

2. There do not appear to be any omens or superstitions in this connection, nor are there special ceremonies observed previous to the start or on the return of the party, save the somewhat peculiar custom, to which I have elsewhere alluded, of maintaining a glum silence for some time at the close of the day's sport.[3]

[1] Their sounding or stamping boards (*pŭ'kuta-yem'nga-*), used in their dances, have, in consequence of their resemblance to shields, been mistaken by more than one visitor as such.

[2] For the weapons used in warfare, *ride post* "Hunting," paragraph 5.

[3] *Vide* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., vol. xi, p. 287. It may here be added that the only explanation which they offer to account for this practice is that they intend thereby to convey to their friends an exaggerated notion of the fatigues they have endured for the general weal.

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3. Females take no part in these expeditions, and boys seldom accompany their elders until after their twelfth year.

4. If more than a few hours' absence is anticipated, besides a supply of provisions, a smouldering log is entrusted to some one member of the party, whose duty it is to prevent its extinction,[1] and to kindle it into a blaze whenever a fire is required. No immediate honours are conferred upon the successful sportsman, but stories of feats of extraordinary prowess are related, with more or less embellishment, from time to time for the benefit of the young and the edification of strangers. No record is kept of the game killed, but, as those distant tribes who are not yet possessed of dogs (or only of a very few) still retain the primitive custom of suspending the skulls of their victims from the eaves or on poles round their huts, a fair idea of their success can be formed by themselves and others from the number thus displayed.

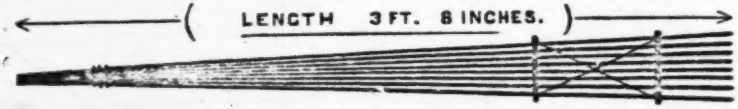
5. Whether in hunting game or in attacking an enemy, the bow (*kâ·rama-*) and arrow are employed, and these are almost[2] identical in form among all the eight tribes of Great Andaman. For spearing turtles and large fish a harpoon (*kowai·a l'ó·ko dū·tnga-*[3]) is used: as a description of this serviceable weapon and of the mode in which it is employed, has been given in Appendix B, it is unnecessary to repeat the information in this place.[4] The only other weapon in use is the pig-spear

[1] *Vide ante* "Fire," paragraph 6.

[2] The comparatively slight difference existing between the form of the five *·ko·jig* and three *yē·rewa-* bows, and the wide distinction observable between both of these and the *jär·awa-* (Little Andaman) bow will be best seen by referring to Plate VI, figs. 1, 4, and 3 (*vide* also Appendix B, item 1).

[3] *Vide* Appendix B, item 10.

[4] In reference to the subject of *fish-spears* an interesting discovery was made on the occasion of the last visit (October, 1882) paid by Mr. H. Godwin-Austen, now in charge of the Andaman Homes, to North Andaman. Some six or more specimens of what, I believe, is quite an unique wooden fish-spear were seen in one or two of the *·yē·rewa-* canoes. As one was fortunately brought away a sketch is here given of it. It reminds one somewhat of the fish-spears used by the Nicobarese (*vide* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., vol. vii, Plate XV), though very inferior, and is doubtless, like them, intended for spearing small fish. It is called *ti·remo.*



The eight long wooden spikes are not tied together in a circular form as in the case of the Nicobar *hokpâk* but in a row, and, as will be inferred from the drawing, they are held in that position by means of two short pieces of wood lashed to them at right angles: from the appearance of the lower end of this weapon, it would seem probable that it is fixed—like the *kowai·a l'ó·ko dū·tnga*—into a bamboo shaft when about to be hurled, but I have ascertained lately that this is not the case, it is merely held at the pointed end.

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411 [177] 22. It is not found that they have any inclination to adopt civilised weapons or tools in lieu of their own, but they have not been slow to avail themselves of the facilities afforded them in recent years for substituting iron for shell, bone, and (?) stone,[1] in the manufacture of their various implements.

23. The blow-pipe, which is used so generally by the Negritos (*Semangs*) of the Malayan peninsula, finds no place among the weapons of these savages. Its absence may be readily accounted for, firstly by their ignorance of poison, or at least of any method of utilising such knowledge as any of them may possess, and secondly by the fact that they are so well able to supply all their wants with the implements already referred to in the foregoing, that their inventive faculty has not been sharpened by the pangs of hunger to devise other or more effective means of destruction. It may be added that slings, throwing sticks, clubs, bird-bolts, or blunt-headed arrows for stunning animals or birds, are likewise not in use among them.

● [224] 24. Although the pig is the object of their chase in their hunting expeditions, they invariably take a few of their pointed arrows, preferably the *tō·lbō·d-*, on the chance of coming across some smaller game, such as an iguana or paradoxurus.[2] To facilitate rapid shooting a man will often hold a number of arrows in the hand which grasps the bow.

[225] 25. From constant practice they are, as might be supposed, very skilful at shooting fish under water. Dr. Brander has correctly observed that "they seem intuitively to have calculated with great accuracy the difference of direction to be allowed for oblique aqueous refraction;" but these shots are almost always, if not invariably, made at a distance of a few yards only, and never so far as "30 yards,"[3] or "with three-pronged barbed arrows," such missiles being neither made nor used, at least by any of the Great Andaman tribes.[4]

883 224 26. Boys soon learn to practice at near objects with the small bows and arrows to which allusion has already been made, and many of them often contribute materially to the family larder by their early prowess. It is a common sight to see youths and children (and even their elders), when travelling, wantonly shoot at small passing objects, both on land and in the water, by way

[1] *Vide* Journ. Anthrop. Inst., vol. xi, p. 271.

[2] While these two animals are killed at all seasons of the year, the pig-hunts take place chiefly during the rains, when this animal is in excellent condition, and their diet, owing to the comparative scarcity of fruit and honey, less varied; even if with young the pig is not spared.

[3] The well-nigh impossibility of ever seeing from the shore or from a canoe a fish swimming at such a distance would sufficiently account for this.

[4] It is possible that Dr. Brander saw the *single* specimen of an arrow answering to this description which was obtained in 1880 from North Sentinel Island.

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of practice or to display their skill. No reproach is offered by the bystanders to one who wounds an animal without killing it.

27. Pigeons, waterfowl, ducks, and flying-foxes are sometimes shot, but never while on the wing, or when perched in such a position as to risk the recovery of the arrow.

28. In addition to the bows and arrows, their hunting gear consists generally of a hone (*tâ·lag-*[1]), a *Cyrena* shell (*ū·ta-*[2]), an adze (*wō·lo-*[3]), and often now-a-days a spear (*ēr-dū·tnga-*[4]); sometimes a knife (*chô-* or *kô·no-*[5]) is also taken, but as the blade of the pig-arrow or spear can be made to serve this purpose, it is not regarded as an essential part of their equipment.

29. They employ no stratagems for deceiving or decoying game, nor do they prepare snares or pitfalls for it.

30. When unaccompanied by dogs the hunters usually follow the pig's tracks, evincing while doing so their accurate knowledge of its habits. Immediately the object of their search is sighted they endeavour to surround it as noiselessly as possible—taking no precautions, however, against approaching it from windward—and, finally rushing forward and yelling vociferously, discharge their arrows. This practice of driving is generally adopted near the coast and in the vicinity of a belt of *Rhizophora conjugata* where the animals, becoming entangled among the roots or sinking into the soft soil, are easily captured or despatched. The ownership of the carcass is decided in favour of the person who inflicted the first serious wound, and he is exempt, if he please, from carrying home his prize or from any further trouble in connection with it; the cleaning, cooking, and quartering of the animal is undertaken by any one who chooses to volunteer his services, during which interval the day's adventures are narrated: those who have remained at home share equally with the hunters[6] in the spoil, for they are supposed to have been engaged in contributing to the general wants of the community.

31. There are, of course, some in every encampment who, from laziness or want of skill, are of very little use in this respect, but, since any ill-natured remarks at their expense would inevitably result in a more or less serious quarrel, they are rarely twitted with the circumstance, but are permitted to partake of the feast.

[1] *Vide* Appendix B, item 52; also *post* "Stone Implements," paragraph 2.
[2] *Vide* Appendix B, item 51; also *post* "Natural Forms, &c.," paragraph 1.
[3] *Vide* Appendix B, item 15; also *post* "Natural Forms, &c.," paragraph 2.
[4] *Vide* Appendix B, item 9; also *ante* paragraph 5.
[5] *Vide* Appendix B, item 77; also *post* "Natural Forms, &c.," paragraph 4.
[6] On the return of the hunting party the chief is apprised of the nature and amount of the "bags;" whatever is brought in by the married men is taken to their private huts and distributed as they please, but the spoils of the bachelors are at the disposal of the chief, and are distributed according to his orders.

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32. At the conclusion of the repast, the sportsman who has most distinguished himself during a more than ordinarily successful chase is expected to entertain the company, while they dance, with an impromptu song, in the chorus of which the women join.

33. Much of the foregoing applies to the *àryô·to-*, as well as to the *ē·remtâ·ga-*, except of course that, with the former, hunting expeditions are less frequent than turtling and fishing operations.

34. Turtle-hunts take place during the flood-tide, both by day and night; the favourite hour of all is that between sunset and the rising of the waning moon,[1] for then, with the aid of the phosphorescent light, called *pēwō·i-*, caused by the movements of the canoe, they are often able to discover and harpoon the turtle before it is at all aware of their approach; on these occasions they select, if possible, a rocky portion of the coast, where there is little or no foreshore, giving it as their reason that turtles frequent such places on dark nights in order to lay their eggs, and are then easily captured. At other times, the localities preferred for these expeditions are those styled *yàu·la-*, where there is a fine stretch of sand with an extensive foreshore, the reason, of course, being that every dark object is so easily seen in shallow water against a clear sandy bottom.

35. The green or edible turtle (*Chelonia virgata*), called *yà·dī-*, is hunted both by day and night, but the hawkbill (*Caretta imbricata*), called *tàu-*, only by day, as they declare the latter is never seen on dark nights.[2] The flesh of the former is of course preferred, and no use being made of the tortoiseshell obtainable from the latter, it is treated after the feast with as little consideration as the valueless shell of the *yà·dī-*.[3]

36. The practice of capturing turtles by "turning" them when on shore is unknown among these savages; whether this be due to their regarding it as mean and unsportsmanlike, as the disdainful looks and remarks of those I questioned on the subject would lead one to suppose, or whether it be because they so thoroughly enjoy their own methods of procedure, which so fully answer their requirements, I am not prepared to determine, but it is, nevertheless, certain that although well aware, from their knowledge of the animal's habits, that it could be easily surprised

[1] This period has accordingly received a specific name, viz., *â·kà-tig-pâ·la-*.

[2] An average size *yà·dī-* weighs about 80 to 100 lbs., and a *tàu-* considerably less. The heaviest specimen of the former which ever came under my notice weighed about 400 lbs. The ordinary price of a full-grown turtle at Port Blair is five rupees.

[3] These remarks do not of course apply to those living at the homes, as they have long since learnt to benefit considerably by disposing of their tortoiseshell to visitors and residents at Port Blair.

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Report of a Survey of the Inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during 1948-49

[21]

By

B. S. Guha

Director, Department of Anthropology

About the end of the year 1946, Mr H. J. Stooks, Deputy Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, consulted me with regard to proposals made by Sri A. V. Thakkar of the Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh for undertaking work for the amelioration of the conditions of the inhabitants of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on the same lines as the Sangh has been doing among the Bhils and other tribes of Central India. The problem of the Aborigines of the Andaman Islands, however, is not the same as that of the other primitive tribes of India. These people are some of the most ancient remnants of the human race still surviving in any part of the world, who had been very little affected from contact with other people and subsist principally on fishing and hunting. The need among them is not so much the spread of education and social uplift as the arrest of the decline in population which has been most alarming. Since the establishment of the Penal Settlement at Port Blair in 1858, the condition of the "Friendly Tribes" among these inhabitants have been most distressing. Due in the beginning to armed encounters with the forces of the Government, and also as a result of ravages from diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis contracted from Indian convicts, there has been a continuous decline in the Andamanese population. From an estimated figure of about 10,000 people in 1779 the tribe has been reduced to only 70 in 1931, and at the time of our visit there were probably not more than 37 individuals still living. Whether it will be possible to save the Andamanese from the fate of the Tasmanians whose last surviving representative passed away about 1770 is extremely doubtful.

The hostile branch of the Andamanese tribes known as the Jarawa-Onge-Sentinelese group, fortunately has been spared the fate of their more "friendly" kinsmen, and as a result of implacable hostility and comparative isolation have survived to a much larger extent. In the western forest belts of Middle and South Andamans, the Little Andaman, and the North Sentinel Islands they have resisted all intrusions from outsiders and were known to have lived in these places comparatively unmolested. No accurate census of these tribes however, was ever taken, but from estimates made by people who had some knowledge of the tribes, it does not seem possible that the total strength of these people could be more than a few hundred souls altogether before the last war. What has happened since and how far these people, specially the Jarawas, have suffered from Japanese occupation cannot accurately be determined. It is known that there had been some bombing by the Japanese in the Jarawa tract, but whether any Jarawa was killed is not known. I, therefore, suggested to Mr Stooks that an anthropological survey of the Islands was essential and a probable estimate of the surviving settlements of the population made before the question of any social welfare work can be considered.

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

no specialized physicians, the Onge do not understand that payment can be exacted for medical care. This stems from the fact that wages are not considered by those happy people as payment for any kind of work whatsoever, but only as a gift. I realized this when I tried to pay my guides after our extenuating marches through the jungle : in order to avoid offending the natives that we had casually met in the course of our trip, I had to give equal reward to everybody.

The Onge consider some men or women better endowed than others with anti-malefic influence ; but these too neither demand nor receive wages for their services. Evil spirits or evil persons are believed to be principally responsible for illness. A series of superstitions and remarkable habits derive from this belief. The above-mentioned precautions concerning the *naquinēghē* are among them. For identical reasons they carefully hide hair cuttings, but not nail parings, for the simple reason that nails are never cut but worn down by digging for edible roots, fishing, and other rough work. Superstition, as we know, is also the reason for painting the body to prevent fever and other ills.

In the depths of their jungle the Onge appear to practice some kind of witchcraft. On several occasions I noticed the mysterious behaviour of some natives travelling with me. Occasionally a man left our marching column to examine the inside of a huge hollow tree and signal to his friends. They did not prevent me from looking into the hollow, where I saw only a simple structure of short sticks resembling a trap without being one. The Onge do not use traps ; moreover, those structures were far too flimsy to catch anything. Often, two or three men assembled in consultation, rearranged the sticks that had probably been dislodged by the passage of lizards, crabs or other small animals, and walked away silently. I could get no explanation on the matter. Certainly the Onge are sagacious observers of animal and vegetable life and have deep knowledge of their hidden properties. Some trees are probably used for magical purposes, but, I insist, it is impossible as yet to affirm it. The structures in question consisted of four vertical sticks, about 30 cms long, joined at the top by four more sticks of approximately the same length, placed horizontally. The result was a box-like frame, loose and unsecured. The slightest disturbance, such as a light breeze, could destroy the flimsy construction. As far as I could guess they invested those structures with curative properties, but in what manner remains a mystery. I noticed analogous practices among Central African Pygmies and other primitives.

It is very clear that the Onge dread illness and magic spells, for they consider themselves at a loss in fighting such evils. Unhygienic habits are of no importance to them.

Resting is considered favorable to good health. The Onge indulge voluptuously in rest, interrupting it, however, with too frequent sexual excursions. They mainly rest from doing nothing, because 90 % of their time is spent in what, for them, is the most agreeable manner of enjoying life.

In mid-March, when the honey harvest reaches its peak, the Onge guzzle

10: Sen K-3, 4 (ca. 1955) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

simultaneously with it a successful all-round regional development of the islands. 563 648

The resources of the islands having a small areal extent are very limited though the forest and sea products are fairly rich to deserve special mention. The presence of a variety of valuable species of timber in these islands has led to their exploitation since the development of the Penal settlement. The important species of timber found in the Andaman forests are padauk, garjan etc. In the previous decades, the forest exploitation was never associated with a commensurate amount of forest regeneration. Such policies are being followed at present for saving the forest resources from ruthless exploitation without any adequate means of ensuring a perennial supply of timber by systematic regeneration. The recent colonisation scheme has invoked the enquiry for the clearance of the forests. Andaman forests being rich in timber and also being the only major revenue earning source of the islands should by no means be ruthlessly cleared for settlement. Not only it depletes the forest resources but also degenerates the soil—the soil erosion being the immediate victim after such clearance of forests. Considering the primary importance of the forest resources of the islands, it seems to be a plausible agreement that at least 50% of the land should be reserved under forest cover and a further curtailment from this percentage will undoubtedly lead to serious consequences of the soil simultaneously with a great decrease in the resources of the islands. 313

The sea products range from a wide variety of products from sea shells to sea fisheries. The collection of sea shells is in vogue from a fairly long time and the sea fisheries, mostly being confined to the coastal areas, is conducted by the fishermen and the tribal people for their own consumption. There is a good deal of possibility for furthering the development of marine fisheries on a commercial scale but the lack of enterprise and capital investment has not given rise to any appreciable development. The only two enterprises of the fisheries are those of Trochus and Turbo shells by the Japanese during 1930-36 and another enterprise by a business concern in 1947. Even the present catch from the coastal areas amount to only 300 lbs., a considerable lag from the demand within the islands. 226 228

The means of earning livelihood in the islands were hunting and collecting by the aboriginal population who have not even to-day learnt the techniques of domesticating plants and also animals except the Onges who have domesticated the dogs very recently. The penal settlement and the subsequent expansion of the administrative seat at Port Blair 222 224 231 563 241

Cleaning themselves, to the Onges, means painting themselves to ward off evil and to remove, so they said, the smell of pig fat after the colossal orgies which follow a particularly good hunt, when even they find the stench too much. These orgies, which give them appalling indigestion for days, are followed by an apparently instinctive variation of their diet to raw or cooked vegetable foods. On three occasions from 1952–54 I was present at one of these solemn pork and honey orgies. The Onges ate almost till they burst, and then, hardly able to move, cleaned up by a grand painting session. The women do the painting, families vying with each other to produce weird new designs, which are then copied until the next feast.[1]

Fed and painted, the Onges sit down to smoke, using pipes made from crabs' claws. Still regardless of hygiene the pipes go from one mouth to another, the women smoking just as heavily as the men.

One curious anomaly is that the Onges do sometimes sweep the earth floor of the communal hut. The floor is not deliberately beaten down, but becomes hardened by continuous walking on it; in dry weather it turns to dust, which rises and settles everywhere, especially under the roof, where the lumps of cooked meat, fish and so on are hung. For the cleaning a broom or besom is prepared, well made with very hard, supple, palm fibres, bound tightly and carefully with cords made from reeds. The whole thing is about eighty centimetres long and as thick as a man's wrist.

The dirt is simply swept out all round from under the roof of the hut through the gap between the roof and the ground. In the course of time a ring of refuse builds up round the hut, forming a glorious breeding ground for insects of all kinds. When the hut has to be rebuilt, owing to the ravages of wood-worm and termites, the ring is levelled off to form the new floor. Since the same small, well-chosen site may be used for thousands of years, the hut ends up perching on top of a small mound of refuse dating back to very

[1] From one year to the next I saw no real evolution of art forms but cyclic changes of designs, with a preference for certain geometric patterns, at certain times of the year. Having watched various individuals of both sexes closely over a period of some years I can say that in the Onges at least, contrary to what is generally understood, the use of given patterns, and given kinds of ochre, does not correspond with given types of food. Any feast is always followed by painting, always with the weirdest designs possible, but always geometrical, never far from the current 'fashion', and never even remotely inspired by the basis of the feast.

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11 *Above* Launching an outrigger canoe
12 *Below* Hunter with a monitor lizard
13 Mother and child

142
224
411
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[Facing P. 66, H]

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

among the Onges) of wearing not only necklaces of the carpals and tarsals of deceased kin or pieces of rib, but also, in some groups, the skulls, painted with ochre and hanging from a cord round the neck. The long bones, painted red and white, were reburied in the communal hut. The Onges of today carry only the coloured jawbones of their kin.

No ornaments were found in the middens, nor did we expect to find any, as at death the Onges (and presumably their ancestors) bury all the personal objects of the deceased secretly in the forest, where the termites destroy all traces.

Not all the Arioto can have carried skulls and jawbones. Some clearly carried neither, as all the bones are sometimes found in the middens. A few middens are completely without human bones, particularly in the Port Blair area. Nevertheless at Ciauldari (or Chowldary), ten kilometres to the west, I found in January 1954 long bones without the skull or jawbones, and at Maya Bandar in 1953 I saw almost complete skeletons, not in anatomical position, owing to exhumation and reburial, but including skull, jawbones and in a number of cases the small bones as well.

The evidence of the middens thus clearly shows that burial and subsequent customs differed considerably among the various groups of islanders in the past, as they do today. The majority, judging from the Onges, seem to have remained faithful to a given custom, the dead in all cases continuing to remain a part of the group, whether or not any particular bone was carried about by the members of the group.

It is somewhat surprising to find customs varying so markedly in so primitive and numerically small a population, even though isolated in groups. The explanation lies in the fact that long-established customs may be altered overnight as the result of a 'revelation' by some seer, only to have the new customs overthrown themselves in the course of time by the next 'revelation'. I had an experience of this in the Onges when Enagaghe, a well-known seer, announced one day that he had received an order from the spirits about the way in which hunting trophies were to be displayed. No longer were pig jawbones to be impaled one behind the other on poles hung horizontally along the sloping roof of the hut a little above the hunter's bed. The whole skull, including the jawbones, was to be preserved, the bones held together in their natural

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

position by reed cords, which were to be tied in front of the snout, ending in a cord by which the skull was to be hung above the hunter's bed. No sooner said than done, and at the beginning of 1914 all the old trophies were thrown out into the forest, to be gradually replaced by the new ones. Fortunately I had collected some of the old trophies before the 'revelation'!

From the evidence of the middens it would appear that these variations in burial customs have no practical basis, and probably all derive from similar 'revelations'. Further investigations in a large series of the deposits, enabling dated comparisons to be made, would be extremely revealing.

Even allowing for these sudden alterations in established customs, it is clear that their elaboration indicates slow and hardly perceptible development over long periods of time and the middens must be dated in millennia. The hypothesis put forward by some scholars that the Andamanese are descended from negro slaves who escaped while on their way to the Portuguese colonies in India in the sixteenth or, at the earliest, fifteenth centuries, seems therefore quite untenable, in face of the abundant evidence in favour of the great antiquity of the middens and of the people who built them up.

It seems clear that during the last few thousand years, successive waves of migration have taken place over a whole area bounded on the west by the Andamans and Nicobars. All indications point to a close connection between the Andamanese and the peoples to the westward, the Negrito element remaining alone and almost untouched in the Andamans, but becoming submerged in the Nicobars into the mongoloid element of more recent origin. Even today a number of Nicobarese show signs of Negrito ancestry; short in stature, they have crinkly hair which although long is very different from the straight black hair of the mongoloid element, and their heads, noses and lips bear clear signs of Negrito ancestry.

In addition to these more general conclusions the middens also cast some light on the origin, still somewhat problematical, of the wretched Jarawas of Great Andaman. Comparisons between their middens and those of the Onges show that there were in the past communal huts on Great Andaman exactly the same as those still extant today on Little Andaman.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

often extremely vicious but good hunters. The dogs often roam the forests in packs, hunting and devouring young pigs. The Onges will do nothing about it unless someone forces them to, but if this pack hunting is not stopped the pig will become extinct in ten or twenty years and in 1954 I tried myself (in vain) to draw the attention of the authorities to the situation.

The dog appears in even the most ancient of cultures in Australia, but did not spread to Tasmania, despite the geographical proximity. It arrived on Great Andaman with the establishment of the Indian penal colony and it is thus the Indian pariah which ultimately populated the whole archipelago. A despised outcast in India, the pariah became in the Andamans of enormous value, reverting to its ancient hunting instincts. Burmese police officials taught the islanders how to use the animal for hunting and within a few years it had revolutionized their methods. It led the islanders in fact, to comparative indolence; the dog worked for them, supplying with far less effort as much game as they used to catch in their long, weary and not always successful expeditions. Dogs meant invariable and abundant success in the hunt, and it is hardly surprising that the Andamanese came to develop a somewhat unbalanced affection for them.

On Little Andaman the dogs, with abundant food supplies always easily available, became physically far superior to their ancestors in India; unlike the pariahs they were well muscled, with good skins and coats, although most of them bear the marks of old and recent gashes by boar tusks.

On Great Andaman the dogs voluntarily catch and kill fallow deer. These, like the dogs, have increased to the extent of becoming a pest. The Arioto and Jarawas will not eat them for superstitious reasons, and so they have bred like wildfire, spreading to all the islands as far as Rutland. They swim well, but only with land in sight, and the greater distances involved have so far prevented them from spreading to Little Andaman.

Here the dogs have only one main prey – the pigs. Unlike the deer with their slender legs they cannot outdistance the dogs, and their only defence is to hide under the buttresses of the tree-trunks. The pig rushes underneath the tree, and faces the dogs like a stag at bay. There is no escape, only a few more terrible minutes of life. The pig fights the dogs off desperately, the males inflicting serious

231 224 gashes with their tusks, unaware of the spear thrower coming up from behind. The result is inevitable. The dangerous boars are killed outright, but whenever possible the pig is, like the turtles, trussed helplessly and vivisected, again strictly according to established ritual, and again with an unconscious cruelty that is to Western eyes unbelievable. The liver, lungs, heart and intestines are the dogs' reward, and in a matter of minutes they are gone and the last drop of blood licked up.

224 Before every hunt the dogs are left hungry, on the principle that a well-fed dog does not hunt. If a young or small pig is caught by the pack during the hunt the Onges at once drag the body away and lodge it in the fork of a bush or tree. I have also seen this done if a full-grown pig is caught which is too thin, or unhealthy, or if a sow is taken, as the Onges find the females less tasty. In the dry season, when food is scarce and the pigs are less aggressive, they can be caught by one dog alone.

[261] In the rainy season pork is, to the Onge palate, at its best. The pigs are fat and tasty, gorging on the lush vegetation that follows the onset of the south-west monsoon till they become slow, and easy prey. The dogs follow their tracks easily on the sodden ground, and the usual orgy of slaughter follows day after day, the Onges caring little for tomorrow and nothing for the day after. It is only owing to the fall in the numbers of the human population that the pig is still extant on the island; in compensation for the continuous slaughter I saw whole areas of forest round deserted communal huts where the earth had been literally ploughed up by the snouts of innumerable pigs rooting undisturbed for tubers.

231 During the hunt a number of dogs inevitably lose themselves in the maze of vegetation, and are cut off from the pack. Usually they manage to find their way back to one of the camps. When I went on long journeys into the forest we were always followed by strays. Greeting each other as though they were old friends they would quickly join the pack we used to take with us to hunt for the party. A stray will always try to find its own master, and any that are left behind during the hunt howl desperately like jackals. Others join in, in an eerie chorus, pausing every now and again as though waiting for their master's reply. Their howling is a curious reversion to the wild state – all the canines fear solitude, wherever

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

the arrival of the Negritos in the Andamans from the south; yet more evidence is provided by the Onge arrows. In the Andamans there are two types of arrows, those used for fish, and those for game, the latter also being used against human targets.

The same arrows are found throughout the archipelago, confirming a common origin. Only the dimensions vary from one area to another and that only very slightly; the Onges have both the biggest fishing arrows, and the biggest arrow harpoons, and the Arioto the smallest. In the past the islanders used arrows with from two to four points for fish, but I was unable to find any traces of them; those picked up on North Sentinel some years ago were possibly the last to be made.

The fishing arrow of the Andamans is made basically from the small native bamboo. The Onges remove the knots by scraping them down gradually with *Cyrena* shells, and then cut off a length varying between seventy centimetres and about one metre. Into one end they fix securely a hardwood stick, fifteen to twenty centimetres long. This foreshaft takes the head, now nearly always iron, but in the past made of wood, fish spines or pig bone. In the kitchen-middens I also found heads made out of shaped pieces of *Tridacna*. The three parts of the arrow are then bound together with very thin waxed fibres, wound carefully round and round, great care being taken to prevent the bamboo shaft splitting where the foreshaft is forced in. The completed arrow finishes up 1–1·15 metres long overall. The head is barbed, to hold the fish once it is hit; to get it out the whole arrow has to be pulled through. Sometimes, but not always, the shaft has a notch in it, to take the cord, care being taken to make the notch never more than two centimetres from any knot, to avoid any possibility of the shaft splitting. Alternatively, splits are prevented by binding waxed thread tightly round the shaft.

The hunting arrow, or arrow harpoon, is an intelligent adaptation, the result of acute observation of wild life, and is more complicated than the fishing arrow which is intended only to pierce the victim. The hunting arrow must not only score a hit, it must also prevent the animal from escaping into the undergrowth and force it to reveal its position. The harpoon holds the victim cruelly and securely, and the excruciating pain caused by the drag of the cord forces the animal to reveal its position by its cries of agony. The

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

screams of a wild boar can be heard for hundreds of metres, drawing the hunters in from all sides, eager to take it alive. If it proves to be a large male, whose tusks can inflict appalling injuries, the hunters kill it at once with a spear or with a third type of arrow which has a long fixed head. This type of arrow, which does not differ greatly from those found in other parts of the world, is still used by some of the Andamanese against human enemies.

The shaft of the arrow harpoon is made preferably from *Tetranthera lancifolia*, very common all over the archipelago. The wood for the shafts has to be straight, very slender at one end, where a notch is cut half a centimetre deep to take the cord, and a little thicker at the other, which is hollowed out for about one centimetre to take the head of the weapon. Splitting of the wood at the ends is, as usual, prevented by binding the shaft with *gnetum* fibres, twisted into thread and waxed with beeswax.

The efficiency of the harpoon depends on the double-strand cord, extremely strong, made from *Hibiscus* fibres. One end is fixed on to the shaft, five centimetres from the point at which the foreshaft enters it, and the other to the foreshaft, two centimetres from the base, with a thirty-two centimetre loop of cord between the two fixings.

The harpoon blade, now made of iron, is eleven centimetres long and spear-shaped, ending in a series of barbs. The haft of the blade is bound tightly on to the short foreshaft, also eleven centimetres long, which is scraped thin at the end so that the haft can be bound on smoothly. The complete weapon mounted for use is about eighty-eight centimetres long overall in the Onges and Jarawas, and slightly shorter, about sixty-five centimetres, in the Arioto.

To prepare the harpoon for use the slack of the cord is wound firmly round the shaft, and the foreshaft with the blade attached is forced in. As the harpoon strikes, the shaft becomes detached and the victim, firmly held by the barbed arrow head, drags it along on the end of the cord until it catches in the undergrowth and holds the animal fast.

There is little difference between the arrow harpoons of Little Andaman and Great Andaman, and what difference there is affects only the dimensions, the type of cord, and the form of the barbs. The basic principle remains the same wherever it is found; all the Negritos, including the Semang and Aeta still use it, although these

11: Ciprani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

136 *fortispina*, uses a similar action on the larger bivalves. Its shell is equipped with a very effective form of tin-opener, which it keeps polished by vigorous rubbing.)

I watched a *Pterocera* attentively scrutinizing the hand holding it. After exploring it very carefully, the creature tried to free itself by beating violently with its foot, causing considerable pain. I held one by one of its protuberances, which was like a large right-angled hook. Suddenly, while my attention was held by a shoal of fish, I felt a sharp pain on the back of my hand. Taken by surprise, I watched the creature to try and discover what it had done. From a furrow at the base of one large front hook, a little to its left, I saw a tentacle emerge, able to turn in any direction, with a retractable eye at its tip. The eye, after a few exploratory movements, fixed its gaze on the place on my hand the creature intended to hit, and then the foot began to beat wildly on my hand, time and time again, causing a quite surprising degree of pain.

462 226 224 It is during the honey feasts, when the tides are exceptionally low and the seas calm, that the womenfolk come into prominence. While the men normally do all the hunting for game and large fish, using arrows and harpoons, the women, with their nets, catch the smaller fish in the rivers and marshes, and among the coral reefs at low tide. Their contribution to the everyday diet is by no means negligible, and during the season of very low tides their daily haul is tremendous.

262 825 The importance of fish to the Onges is shown by the fact that their word for it, *ciogbe*, is also used to mean food in general, and clearly dates back to the time before the arrival of the pigs on the island, when fish and sea food in general was the basis of their diet.

[251] So plentiful is it that even at the height of the season the most they do in the way of preserving anything for future use is to expose the fish to smoke in order to deter flies from laying eggs on it for a day or two.

462 226 Only on very rare occasions do the men help in the net-fishing, and then only when they can completely fill the canoes with fish very quickly. I saw it happen for the first time on 24 March 1953, in the great coral reef near Nachuge, just as it happens all over the island at this time of year, when the pilchard shoals are so far inshore that there are not enough canoes to hold the catch. As the

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Unity of the Negritos

174 It appears that the Andamanese, before their migration to the archipelago, copied from other Asiatic and Oceanic peoples customs and rites whose origin and meaning were unknown to them. They went on and on observing these rites blindly, till they gradually degenerated to their present rudimentary form. In the Onges of today they seem like mere superstitions, badly digested importations, far from any of their original meaning. The process is a phenomenon which has occurred over and over again among primitive peoples who come in contact with other, to their eyes superior, cultures. They feel an urge to imitate something, as it were, more elegant, and so come to follow the new ways out of habit. I have seen the effects of this both in Africa and in Asia, particularly as the result of contact with European influences.

The practice of vivisecting animals for food, for instance, was widespread throughout the world, frequently in connection with certain ideologies, although these were not usually based on pure superstition. Rituals which to us are horrible beyond measure are seen by primitive peoples from childhood merely as a necessary part of cooking or the acquisition of food. And yet such practices are found also in peoples with a culture considerably beyond the primitive. Some cannibals, for example, are relatively advanced; there are in fact some cannibal peoples who have reached the stage of agriculture. The Andamanese, however, are far behind that stage of development, and they have never acquired the ideologies leading to cannibalism. One can only accept that they do genuinely believe that in practising vivisection they are acting for the common and the individual good.

224 There is an established and closely observed order of precedence

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

in the division of all meat. Certain cuts are the property of the hunter, of his helpers, and of his relations and after them, in order, of the remaining members of the group; everyone knows his position in advance. Each portion is tied round with a reed fibre, which is allowed to dangle out over the top of the communal cooking-pot ready to haul the meat out when required.

In the case of pork the prized cut is one which comprises the kidneys and the surrounding fat; this fat is called *cian*,[1] and is very highly esteemed. Some authors (Brown, for example) have stated that turtles and pigs are always cut up with the head ritually pointing towards the sea as otherwise the meat would be considered inedible. This is certainly not the case on Little Andaman, and I have never seen any such directional ritual among any of the Negritos, all of whom practise division of meat according to a prescribed order of precedence. Turtles at any rate are slaughtered facing up the sloping beach simply because it is then easier to hold the beast from behind and avoid its bite. Ritual there is, but usually with a good practical basis.

More ritual attaches to the way in which the game is carried back to the camp, and the wood to be used for the cooking fire. Pigs, killed and gutted, are tied in ropes made of *Ficus laccifera* and carried somehow on the back of the victorious hunter. If it is not far to the camp he will not bother to tie up the snout and feet, but otherwise the front and back legs are tied, and one long cord joins both pairs to the snout – again a practical ritual, giving the hunter a more compact weight to carry.

Man, Portman, Brown and others all say that each type of game has to be cooked over a fire of a particular wood. My own observations showed that whereas the ritual of dissection is inviolable, the Onges always use the first wood that comes to hand, regardless of its source, taking as usual the line of least resistance. This is again in keeping with the tendency of primitive peoples to expend only the very minimum of energy to achieve their object. Their religious beliefs and superstitions are not carried to the limit, simply because

[1] It is interesting that in their very restricted world the Onges have few standards of comparison or words to express condemnation or approval, and this word *cian* is used as one of high praise, applied to inanimate objects, animals, and people alike. The precise qualities which are conveyed by the word are difficult to evaluate in the absence of fuller knowledge of the Onge language.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

252 372 824 their love of existing with as little effort as possible is paramount. Since any wood is as good as the next for making a fire, the spirits conveniently have nothing to say in the matter. In other 787 222 circumstances material considerations lead to quite the opposite effect: when the Onges dig up roots or tubers they not only replace the earth, but cover the place with leaves, the ritual having the good practical objective of appeasing the spirits and ensuring further supplies.

171 224 The preservation of skulls for magical purposes or out of pure superstition survives mainly in Asia and Oceania. In Asia it coincides with other beliefs which demand the killing of domestic animals by strangulation. I have seen this practised along the high reaches of the valley of the Brahmaputra, particularly among the Abor, and the Nagas, and in many other tribes to the south of Tibet and China, all of whom preserve skulls. Head-hunting, found throughout southern Asia, in the islands, and as far as Oceania, is also practised in the areas where animal skulls are preserved.

171 The preservation of animal skulls, particularly bear skulls, is still practised in mongoloid peoples as far as the north of Asia; apart from the Andamans and the Nicobars, human and animal bones are preserved in many parts of Indonesia and as far as New Guinea. In the corona of small islands along the west coast of Sumatra the custom coincides with many others, as well as with certain types of huts and canoes, all present in the Andamans and Nicobars. A good example are the huts raised up off the ground on stilts, common in the Nicobars, Nias, Engano, Mentawai and various parts of Indonesia. The single-boom canoes of these areas, quite apart from their general similarity of structure, all have certain identical features, even to the method of fixing the lateral float of green wood, with pointed hardwood pegs stuck in it like spills. This, again, cannot be due to chance; it must be the effect of a very ancient cultural diffusion, now surviving only in a few specific areas.

224 531 462 The skulls preserved by the Onges have one point of interest; it is the duty of the wife to clean the trophies brought back by her proud husband and then paint them lovingly with lines of ochre. After every successful hunting expedition the wives can be seen busily painting, while the husbands look on with satisfaction.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Brown states that dugong skulls are found among the hunting trophies of the Andamanese. I can myself vouch for the fact that this is not the case among the Onges or the twenty-three surviving Arioto; both keep dugong jaws and long bones, but the skulls of only pigs and turtles. The Andamanese in general do not regard animal bones as having the same protective powers as human; the existence in the Andamans of any magical practices connected with either animal or human bones has not, in my view, been adequately proved. In the absence of such proof I feel unable to agree with the authors who assert that these practices do exist, and I am inclined to feel that the cultural level of the peoples of the Andamans is so low as to rule out the existence of magic or witchcraft in any form.

From the mass of data of all kinds I was able to collect on my trips to the Andamans, a general pattern emerges from which it is possible to draw substantial conclusions as to the cultural and somatic origins of the Onges and hence of the other peoples of the archipelago. To summarize these conclusions must inevitably involve some repetition of what has been said in previous chapters.

Taking first the people of the Nicobar Islands, the nearest geographically to the Andamanese, it is generally accepted that with the exception of the Shom-Pen of Great Nicobar the Nicobarese are culturally closely similar. Although there are no pure Negrito types in the Nicobars there are evident crosses, similar to those which appear in one area of Sumatra to the east, where a small Negrito component exists among a predominantly mongoloid type. This may well be the result of the Negritos having spread at one time over a very wide area and there is in fact cultural evidence in support of the suggestion.

The mongoloid somatic type of the Nicobars appears in the general shape and proportions of the body, skin colour, facial contours, and the hair, which is long and straight, unlike that of the Negritos. Both types, however, have scant body hair, and differ in this respect from the pygmies of Africa.

Although the size and skin colour of most Nicobarese is very different from the Onges, a few are strikingly like them in facial contours, size, and woolly hair. There are also legends of a people who lived in the Nicobars long ago, small, very black, with tight

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Queensland and (as the Cape Bedford type) elsewhere. Oars, method of fixing the booms and float – all are similar throughout the area, including the Andamans.

Even game, once caught, is treated and distributed similarly by these peoples, from the Andamans to Oceania. Cooking is done without salt, in earth ovens (whether or not fire or red-hot stones are used) very different from those of Africa and America. The Semang and Aetà of today know how to make fire by friction, as do the peoples of New Guinea, Australia and Polynesia; the Tasmans also have the knowledge to do so, but prefer to carry burning logs with them on their journeys, like the Andamanese. In certain parts of New Guinea and perhaps in some of the Pacific islands (as in the Andamans) the art of fire-making was unknown or possibly forgotten until recent times; it is said that the Papuans of the Bay of Astralobius knew nothing of the art until the middle of the nineteenth century. But the only sure information comes from the Andamans, where, whether through ignorance or loss of knowledge, the art of fire-making is unknown and fire is always carried everywhere.

Among the objects typical of the Andamans and found also among the Semang, the Aetà, and other Oceanic peoples are the digging stick and the crude hatchet. The former, used for gathering edible roots and tubers, is merely a pointed stick, but every family possesses one. The hatchet is slightly more elaborate, having both handle and blade, and like the digging stick, occurs always in virtually the same form.[1] Objects woven from vegetable fibres are also very similar in appearance – often very durable and sometimes pleasing by any standards. In some places woven breast-plates are used in warfare, but here the Jarawas differ, using single sheets of bark.

These are but a few of the many examples which one can find of this striking similarity between these widely separated peoples. And alongside cultural similarities there exist others, anthropological and physical, which cannot be overlooked. Physically the

[1] This is simply a cutting tool fixed into a natural elbow in a suitable branch. The blade is fixed into the wood near the elbow, and the branch is cut off, so as to leave a short handle. The whole thing is reminiscent of a swan's head on a long neck, and is easily turned into a crude plane or adze by revolving the blade in the haft through a right angle.

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or form of numerical evaluation is further support for the extremely low stage of cultural development at which they became isolated.

22 ART

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When painting their bodies with ochre the Onges have no idea of symbolic representation, and use only geometrical designs. These invariably seem spontaneous, and in my view do not represent a degenerate form of some more highly evolved art, half forgotten over the centuries; in short, the 'artists' of the Andamans, with no conception of symbolism, are even today less advanced than their Palaeolithic counterparts.

23 DIGGING STICKS

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In late Palaeolithic deposits, stones with holes in them have been found which correspond to those still in use among peoples such as the Bushmen, to add weight to their digging sticks. The absence even today of any form of weighted stick in the Andamans, where stone is plentiful, would appear to antedate the culture at least to early Palaeolithic.

24 HUNTING

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[411]
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The Onges still use the Palaeolithic throwing stick, although it is not their main hunting weapon. They have no idea of fixed traps, which must from the evidence have been known in Palaeolithic times, and it is hard to believe that a people so dependent upon hunting would have lost the art once it had been acquired. They have crude nets which the women use for fishing, but these are probably a comparatively recent introduction, which has arrived via the Nicobars.

25 DOMESTIC ANIMALS

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The Andamanese have none, and this would seem to add weight to the evidence for their great antiquity.

26 ECONOMY

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There is no economic system of any kind, and from the evidence available it is highly unlikely that even the most primitive form ever existed. There is no conception whatever of providing for tomorrow, or of any form of exchange or barter.